

Multi-Jurisdictional Flood Mitigation Plan Initiative for the Non-Tidal NJ Section of the Delaware River Basin

Regional Planning Team Meeting Summary

Date: October 11, 2006; 9:00 a.m.

Location: NJ Water Supply Authority Annex, Clinton, N.J.

In attendance: Bob Tudor, DRBC
Rick Fromuth, DRBC
Laura Tessieri, DRBC
Paul Miller, NJOEM
Joe Ruggeri, NJDEP
Kerry Kirk Pflugh, NJDEP
Greg Westfall, NJOEM (USDA-NRCS)
Nancy Palladino, Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Sue Dziamara, Hunterdon County Planning
James Martin, Hunterdon County Engineer
Robert Hartman, Mercer County OEM
Marisa Wieczorek, Mercer County Planning
Frank E. Wheatley, Warren County OEM
Bill Hunt, Warren County OEM
Dave Gallant, Warren County Public Safety
Steve Marvin, Warren County Administrator
David Dech, Warren County Planning
Dave Hicks, P.E., Warren County Engineer
Henry Patterson, NJ Water Supply Authority
Amy Shallcross, NJ Water Supply Authority
Chris Smith, USDA-NRCS
Melissa Nichols, representing Assemblywoman Karrow
Celeste Tracy, Delaware River Greenway Partnership
Donna Drewes, MLUC @ TCNJ
Howard Wolf, FEMA
Betsy Varno, FEMA
Chad Brown, FEMA
Jeff Motiley, NJOEM
Mike Devlin, NJOEM

Summary:

The meeting convened at 9 a.m. at the N.J. Water Supply Authority in Clinton, N.J. This site was chosen as it is a central location to all Counties involved in the proposed planning process. Bob Tudor of DRBC made introductions and thanked everyone for attending. He presented some visioning goals that included:

- Flood Loss Reduction for this section of New Jersey
- Getting participation from all 64 municipalities in the proposed planning area.
- Completion of a plan would enable those municipalities to become eligible for future mitigation grants

Laura Tessieri of DRBC presented the proposed planning process and outlined some of the potential roles and responsibilities of the process that would need to be met moving forward.

Discussion was then led to bring up any concerns or comments on the proposed process and how to make the planning initiative a successful one. Comments received included:

- The need to come up with an effective marketing strategy to encourage municipalities to commit time and resources. Possible approaches included:
 - There is a lot of work required in order to prepare a Flood Mitigation Plan (FMP). You can either begin the process now with help or you do it all yourself. Present the table of contents to show the level of detail needed in the plans. It was also recommended that the \$'s spent by other municipalities who have already created individual plans be presented.
 - There is no guarantee of funding for implementing a plan, but whatever future mitigation funds become available from FEMA will not be available to municipalities without a plan.
 - It is possible that once a municipality has a prioritized and ranked list of mitigation actions that those actions will get more attention and may possibly attract other mitigation funds.
 - The mitigation actions identified in the plan will be shared with NJDEP and the USACE to complement existing and future regional studies and initiatives.
 - Participating in the FMP will complete a bulk of the work required to produce an All Hazards Plan. Each municipality is required to have such a plan.
 - It would be helpful to present a list of completed projects statewide that have been funded using FMA funds.
 - Demonstrate to the officials your commitment level.
- Concerns exist regarding how much time municipalities (and their planners, engineers, staff) are expected to commit to this initiative. There was a recommendation for the DRBC to better identify and quantify the amount of effort expected to be expended up front. Additionally, the most concise and clear instructions for the municipalities should be created. This might include flyers such as “who should be included in your planning process,” “Required steps to complete your planning process,” etc. Municipalities are limited in resources both by time and staff. The easier the process, the better. Also, many local OEM volunteers have no expertise in flooding – they will need to rely on their engineers and planners who are usually contracted out at an hourly rate.

- A concern was brought up that it will be easier to convince riverside communities to participate than communities located ‘upstream’. Possible ways to encourage ‘upstream’ municipalities to participate include:
 - Emphasizing that completion of this plan gets you 75-80% of the way to an All Hazards Plan.
 - Emphasize the potential to include stormwater problems in the mitigation actions section.
 - Mention Dam inventory, possible dam shadow ordinances.
 - Use this planning initiative to emphasize and educate about the watershed management link between upriver and downstream towns.
- It was brought up that many communities already have a lot of data gathered, either through 2020 or through developing their stormwater management plans. (Stormwater Regulation Committees?)
- It would be helpful to the municipalities to view either sample mitigation plans or sample mitigation actions.
- It would be helpful to advertise all potential sources for mitigation funding.

Future County Kick-off meetings were discussed:

- Scheduling of the meeting (day vs. night) is county specific. Mercer voiced a preference for a day meeting. Warren County mentioned the possible benefits to a night meeting.
- Scheduling may prove to be difficult due to Election Day, Veterans’ Day, the League of Municipalities and the upcoming holidays. The last week in November and the first week in December were highlighted as potential meeting times. Hunterdon expressed an interest in holding the meeting in late Oct. or early Nov.
- County specific meetings can be created. County Officials should feel free set the agenda, open and lead the meetings if they have such an interest.
- If municipalities in Mercer County within the watershed express interest in being involved, it will be necessary for a host County to move forward and provide the County framework for them to work under.

Existing data that was identified included:

- Hunterdon “fly-over” aerials from the June 2006 storm.
- Each municipality has information in their existing Stormwater Mgmt plans. Some public works needs may have already been identified.
- GIS data layers that could be made available from Counties and State. A meeting to coordinate and inventory existing data was recommended.

Other potential parties recommended being included in the planning process?

- National Park Service; Owns and operates a large portion of Hardwick in Warren County and many areas in Sussex.

- Dam Safety: inventory high hazard dams (NJDEP is a project partner). The Byram dam failure in 2000 that flooded downstream towns was discussed.
- D&R Canal (Ernie Hahn)
- Joint Toll Bridge Commission
- Soil Conservation Districts (4)
- Highlands Council
- Watershed Associations (Musconetcong, Pohatcong and Pequest)

Points of Contact were identified for each County. They are as follows:

- Frank Wheatley, Warren
- Marisa Wieczorek and Robert Hartman, Mercer
- Sue Dziamara and Bill Powell, Hunterdon
- Sussex to be determined. It was mentioned that the date of the meeting did not allow either Emergency Mgmt official to attend, but that interest had been expressed by the County and DRBC would provide notes of the meeting to the County.

Assemblywoman Karrow's office offered help in communicating with the municipalities in her area for outreach. This would include Hunterdon and Warren municipalities. County officials were also encouraged to consider how they may be willing to commit to helping with the needed outreach.

Meeting was adjourned at noon. DRBC will contact each County to discuss and set potential dates for their upcoming County Kick-off meetings.